1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

rumors, and are easily convinced that others nourish bad intentions toward them. The most serious recent conflict occurred in 1914 (194, pp. 141-149); the natives, encouraged by an old woman named Angata, killed a great many animals and claimed possession of the cattle and land. The uprising was provoked by the action of a white man, but Angata kindled the animosity of the natives by dreams in which God supposedly revealed His will to her. Sure of divine protection, they became very daring. The agitation finally subsided, as such things usually do among the natives who indulge in novelties and soon grow tired of them. There have been more recent disturbances, but none so grave as that witnessed by Routledge. However, since the natives are constantly incited against the company, it is probable that trouble will again arise.

The most interesting aspect of the culture of present-day natives is their very sincere and deep attachment to the Catholic church, though the missionaries did not stay long on the island. The last pagans were baptized only two years before the destruction of the mission. After the departure of the missionaries, the island was without a priest for 16 years. In 1886 Father Hippolyte Roussel returned to the island for 6 months. He was accompanied by Father Albert Montiton. Later, several priests visited the island but stayed only a short time. Recently some Chilean priests have remained longer, among them Father Bienvenido Estella, who has written an account of his experience in Easter Island (80). However, for various reasons, no priest resides there permanently and rites are performed by a catechist of Mangarevan origin. Every day the natives gather in the church to make their prayers together; on Sunday they celebrate a kind of mass, and four times a week they spiritually associate themselves with the masses celebrated throughout the world. The hymns taught by the French missionaries are still sung in the church and the tradition is kept alive by a singing school, presided over by women whose mothers had received the teachings of missionaries. The grip of Christianity has been so strong that very few pagan beliefs or practices have survived. The fear of ghosts and the importance given to prayers are the only traces of primitive religion.

METEOROLOGY

Nights of the Moon

The old Polynesian system of counting time by lunar months in which each night had an individual name was abandoned by the natives when they became Christians. The new faith could not be adapted without the Roman calendar upon which are based all the feasts prescribed by the Catholic Church. The natives are so scrupulous in observance of these holy days that it is not surprising that the European calendar has entirely superseded the primitive system of reckoning time. The old life was so deeply transformed by contact

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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171 532 revan wooden images than between the wooden and stone images of Easter Island. Mangarevan images share with the Easter Island stone statues the typical pursed mouth, but the differences are numerous.

Balfour (9, pp. 361-371), overlooking the Mangarevan parallels, stresses the similarity between the Easter Island stone images and canoe-prow gods and other representations of human form from New Georgia, San Cristoval, and other parts of the Solomon Islands. The proposed analogy strikes me as unconvincing, for the only similarities between the two types of image are the overhanging brows and the long upward-curving nose.

Comparative studies of the religious structures in eastern and central Polynesia reveal a remarkable analogy between the position of the Easter Island statues on the ahus and the uprights on the religious platforms of the Tuamotus, Society Islands, and Necker Island. Detailed research has convinced Emory that the uprights at the back of Tuamotuan ahus, bearing the names of ancestors, were either backrests for the gods or memorials to deified ancestors. In the Tuamotus and in Tongareva the unrights were sometimes trimmed. In the Tuamotus the shaping is often a crude attempt to express the human form. On Necker Island the small stone images of the gods rested against the slabs set on the platform. Between a carved upright and a statue, transition is logical, and it seems to have taken place on Easter Island. The development of the slabs into statues was facilitated by some knowledge of carving which the Easter Islanders already possessed when they settled on their isolated island. On some Easter Island ahus, pillars take the place of statues. At Mataveri such a pillar has one surface carved like the back of a statue.

174 532 The first immigrants to Easter Island probably came from eastern Polynesia and were acquainted with the carving of human figures from wood. Lacking wood in their new home, they applied their skill to the Rano-raraku tuff which is more easily worked than stone. Stimulated by the abundance of tuff and the ease with which statues could be transported across the open country, they created larger and larger statues until stone carving reached there a development greater than in any other part of Polynesia.

RELIGION

177 791 Easter Island religion was more deeply affected by the several catastrophes which befell the people than any other phase of their culture. Roussel (190, p. 424) says that the downfall of the religion took place long before the arrival of the missionaries and that "there remained only a few tapus of which they made little ado" (190, p. 495). Zumbohm (230, vol. 6, p. 128), in 1866, found no ceremony or religious cult in honor of any deity; the pre-missionary decadence of religious beliefs facilitated conversion to Christianity. Even the feasts had lost much of the ancient character, and had become "but

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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entertainments and debauches with competitions between parties from the different bays" (230, vol. 6, p. 125). Eyraud (81, vol. 38, p. 69), who lived many years among the islanders, declares that he never saw any outward expression of religion. 177 771

Now that three generations have passed since the Christianization of the island, almost nothing is remembered about the beliefs and rites of paganism. My attempt to reconstruct some of the pattern of ancient religion rests on bits of evidence taken from several sources. These I checked as best I could.

GODS

Not even a summary classification of the ancient deities can be expected from present-day natives of Easter Island. The word *atua*, which formerly designated pagan deities is now applied to the Christian God. All supernatural beings are classified today under the name of *akuaku*, or more frequently *tatane* (derived from the French satan), or sometimes *varua* (from the Tahitian word meaning spirit). Though memory of the great Polynesian gods and heroes had faded, Routledge (194, p. 236) in 1915 obtained the names of about 90 *akuaku*, lesser gods or spirits. Now, even the old men remember only 30 names. 776

It is likely that the various lists of *akuaku* contain the names of gods who were worshipped by certain tribes or lineages and whose influence was restricted to a definite district; Makemake who, beyond any doubt, was the greatest functioning god of the island has been relegated by the pious natives to the file of *akuaku* or *tatane*.

Easter Island gods, like those everywhere in Polynesia, must have belonged to two classes. The first class included the great figures of creation and major gods like Tangaroa, Tu, and Rongo; the second class embraced an infinity of deities who ranged probably from the sons of the great gods to deified ancestors or simple spirits. The place of a god in one or the other of these two categories did not correspond to his actual importance in religion and in the sentiments of the worshipper. Makemake, who seems to have been the principal god of the islanders, does not figure in the pantheon of the major gods, though he has absorbed many an attribute or power originally invested in the major gods.

The gods of Easter Island, like other Polynesian gods, could be embodied in objects and animals. This power of incarnation is shown most clearly by the bird-man cult and by numerous representations of the god Makemake as a human being with a bird's head.

Major Gods

The most striking feature of Easter Island religion is the unimportance of the great gods and heroes of other Polynesian religions. Seldom is there a

9: Forster T-5 (1774) 1777
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1774. MARCH. from motives of cleanlineſs, like the people of Tonga-Taboo, but fortunately ſeemed to be leſs ſubject to leprous complaints. It is eaſy to conclude that the king of ſuch a people cannot have great and conſpicuous advantages over the commonalty, nor did our party obſerve any thing of that kind. The religion of the Eaſter Iſlanders is ſtill wholly unknown to us, becauſe abſtract ideas are not to be acquired in ſo ſhort a time as our ſtay. The ſtatues, which are erected in honour of their kings, have a great affinity to the wooden figures, called TEE, on the chief's maraïs or burying-places at Taheitee; but we could not poſſibly conſider them as idols, though Roggewein's people would paſs them for ſuch upon us. The fires which the Dutch interpret as ſacrifices, were only made uſe of by the natives to dreſs their meals; and though the Spaniards ſuſpected them to be a kind of ſuperſtition, they were, perhaps, equally miſtaken, becauſe the ſcarcity of fuel obliged the inhabitants to be careful of it, and to prevent their proviſions being uncovered after they had once been put under ground with heated ſtones.

We are unacquainted with the amuſements of the people of Eaſter Iſland, having never ſeen them engaged in any kind of diverſion, nor taken notice of a ſingle muſical inſtrument among them. They cannot, however, be entire ſtrangers to amuſements, ſince Maròo-wahai, who ſlept on board,

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

CHAPTER XVI

NATIVE CULTURE IN PRE-CHRISTIAN TIMES (*continued*)

Religion—Position of the Miru Clan—The Script—The Bird Cult—Wooden Carvings.

RELIGION

THE religion of the Islanders, employing the word in our sense, seems always to have been somewhat hazy,[1] and the difficulty in grasping it now is increased by the fact that since becoming Roman Catholics they dislike giving the name of "atua," or god, to their old deities; it only drops out occasionally. They term them "aku-aku," which means spirits, or more frequently "tatane," a word of which the derivation is obvious. The confusion of ideas was crystallised by a native, who gravely remarked that they were uncertain whether one of these beings was God or the Devil, so they "wrote to Tahiti, and Tahiti wrote to Rome, and Rome said he was not the Devil, he was God"; a modern view being apparently taken at headquarters of the evolution of religious ideas. Both these words, tatane and aku-aku, will be employed for supernatural beings, without prejudice to their original character, or claims to divinity; some of them were certainly the spirits of the dead, but had probably become deified; the ancestors of Hotu-matua were reported to have come with him to the island. They existed in large numbers, being both male and female, and were connected with different parts of the island; a list of about ninety was given, with their places of residence. No worship was paid, and the only notice taken of these supernatural persons was to mention before meals the names of those to whom a man owed special duty, and

[1] Our impressions on this head are confirmed by a remark of Brother Eyraud. "Though I have lived in the greatest of intimacy and familiarity with them, I have never been able to discover them in any act of actual religious worship."—*Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, Jan. 1866.